

Message Text

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SUBJECT: FORUM REPORT

REF: AIRGRAM A-2363 OF JUNE 1, 1977

SUMMARY: RESPONSE TO REPORT POSITIVE AND PRODUCED INTERESTING COMMENTS AMONG MISSION WIVES. MANY POINTS WERE RAISED BUT MAJOR CONCERN WAS FOR IMPROVING OPPORTUNITY FOR AND CONDITIONS OF WORK WITHIN MISSION

1. WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPOUSES: AS A RESULT OF READING SUBJECT REPORT COMPLAINT MOST LOUDLY AND UNIVERSALLY VOICED IN SANA WAS DIFFICULTY SPOUSES FIND IN GETTING WORK, WITHIN US MISSION, AND, AFTER FINDING WORK, HOW LITTLE VALUE MONETARILY IS PLACED ON SUCH WORK. FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS WERE MADE FOR DEALING WITH PROBLEMS:

A. REGULATIONS FOR LOCAL HIRE OF AMERICAN DEPENDENTS SHOULD BE MADE EASIER. IT WAS POINTED OUT EVEN WHEN A US AGENCY NEEDS SECRETARIES IT CANNOT HIRE QUALIFIED, INTERESTED SPOUSES FOR BUREAUCRATIC REASONS--OR CAN HIRE THEM ONLY FOR A CERTAIN TIME PERIOD.

B. EACH INDIVIDUAL JOB SHOULD BE VIEWED ON ITS OWN MERITS AND SHOULD BE ACCORDED STATUS AND HOURLY PAY IT NORMALLY WOULD HAVE HAD A PERSON BEEN BROUGHT FROM US TO DO JOB.

CM IN ORDER TO FACILITATE PART-TIME WORK EMPLOYERS SHOULD BE GIVEN AUTHORITY TO SPLIT A GIVEN AMERICAN RESIDENT SLOT INTO TWO-PART-TIME POSITIONS.

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D. WHEN CONSULAR AGREEMENTS ARE NEGOTIATED BETWEEN COUNTRIES RIGHT OF DEPENDENTS BEARING DIPLOMATIC OR OFFICIAL PASSPORTS TO OBTAIN WORK PERMITS TO WORK SHOULD BE NEGOTIATED.

2. LANGUAGE TRAINING: OFTEN FS WIVES ARE UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH SHOPKEEPERS, MAIDS, NEIGHBORS, WHILE IT WAS CONCEDED THAT FSI TRAINING IS NOT FEASIBLE FOR MOST WIVES, TAPES AND HOME STUDY

AIDS SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE.

3. FOREIGN SERVICE ALLOWANCES: IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT AT LEAST HALF TODAY'S FOREIGN SERVICE COUPLES GIVE UP ADVANTAGES TWO SALARIES TO SERVE ABROAD. ALSO, FOREIGN SERVICE SALARIES AND BENEFITS ARE NO LONGER ATTRACTIVE. YET FS FAMILIES SUFFER SEVERE FINANCIAL HARDSHIP ON HOME LEAVE. PER DIEM ALLOWANCES SHOULD BE GIVEN FOR HOME LEAVE TO ALLEVIATE THIS HARDSHIP. ABROAD COST-OF-LIVING ALLOWANCES ARE RAISED LONG AFTER COST-OF-LIVING HAS RISEN SHARPLY ABOVE COST OF LIVING IN WASHINGTON, DC. IT SHOULD EITHER BE RAISED PROMPTLY OR BE MADE RETROACTIVE.

4. MORALE AT POST: OFTEN HOUSES ARE NOT READY FOR THE FAMILY WHEN THEY ARRIVE AT POST EVEN THOUGH HOUSE HAS BEEN UNOCCUPIED FOR SOME PERIOD AND POST HAS HAD LONG ADVANCE WARNING OF FAMILY'S ARRIVAL. THIS PROBLEM MUST BE ALLEVIATED.

5. HARDSHIP FOR CHILDREN: FS CHILDREN SUFFER FROM THEIR PARENTS' ITINERANT CAREER. YET EVEN IN MOST ISOLATED AND DIFFICULT POSTS LITTLE ATTEMPT IS MADE TO PROVIDE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR THEM. COULDN'T POSTS BE STUDIED FOR THEIR NEEDS IN THIS AREA AND FUNDS BE FOUND TO PROVIDE SPECIAL RESOURCES, ENTERTAINMENT AND ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN-DEPENDENTS?

6. POST ACTION: DURING THESE DISCUSSIONS IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THE POST HAS BEEN LAX IN PREPARING ORIENTATION MATERIALS AND WELCOMES
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FOR NEWLY-ARRIVED FAMILIES. IT WAS DECIDED THAT FS WIVES WOULD MEET EARLY IN NEW YEAR TO FORM A WELCOMING COMMITTEE AND DECIDE WHAT MATERIALS SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN AN ORIENTATION BROCHURE AND THEN ASK THE EMBASSY ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION TO HIRE A DEPENDENT TO TYPE AND PUBLISH AN ORIENTATION BROCHURE.
SCOTES

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